

A Field Guide to Scream Queens

A handy checklist of
horror starlets, with
select comments on
life in the B-movie
industry.

By BILL GEORGE

Linnea Quigley

Scream queens" is a label affectionately applied to actresses who are often associated with the horror genre. However, the horror cinema's modern generation of women are a contradiction of the "scream queen" handle; unlike most of their precursors, today's ladies no longer resign themselves to screaming, but function as the aggressors. Demonstrative of the changing times are some recent remakes of classic genre titles. Barbara, the damsel-in-distress of 1968's *Night of the Living Dead*, retreated into a stupor, yielding the "real world" to male dominion. Twenty-two years later, the same female character is transformed into a bad-ass Rambette who eats zombies for breakfast. The original *Blob's* vulnerable heroine is reinterpreted, in the 1988 remake, as a tough cookie who is quite capable of assuming the role of rescuer, independent of her "rebel" boyfriend.

This evolution didn't occur until recently. Digressing from stereotype, Sigourney Weaver proved a pioneering role model as the

EDITOR'S NOTE: David Kuehls, Tom Rainone, Anthony Timpone and John Wooley contributed to this article.

Bobbie Bresee



formidable opponent and sole survivor of the *Alien*. Unfortunately, the lesson was lost on subsequent horror filmmakers, whose spate of slasher films contributed less to the development of gutsy heroines and more to the female as another body bag. It wasn't until nearly a decade later that women not only ditched the victim roles, but have gained supremacy as the stars of the horror cinema. Indeed, last year's trade papers launched the premiere of the Cannes Film Festival by generically referring to the '90s horror output as "Linnea Quigley movies." But the victory is not without liabilities; actresses complain about their sex appeal, a commercial draw, turning into an excuse for gratuitous nudity, not to mention scripts that regress to the bimbo treadmill.

Herewith, included among the genre credits of today's most popular scream queens, are recollections and insights reflecting the female psyche of the horror cinema today.

■ Suzanne Ager

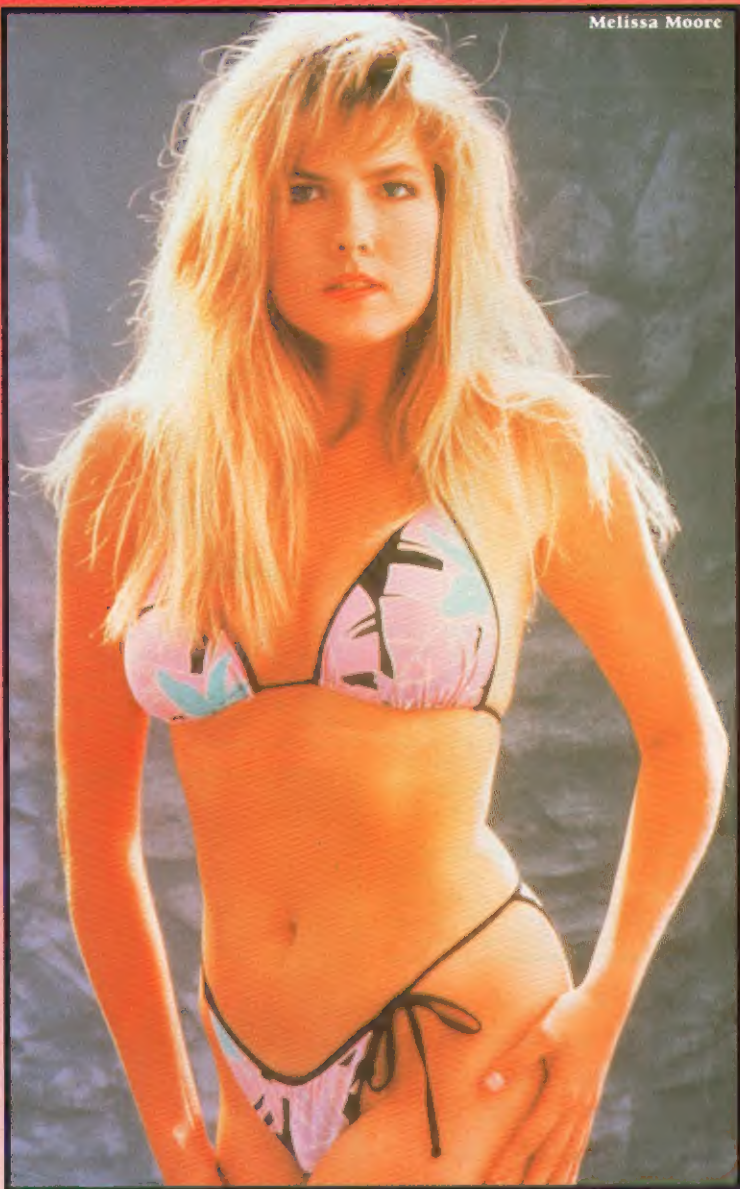
CREDITS: *Millennium Countdown*, *Smooth Talker*, *Shock 'Em Dead*, *The Alien Within*, *Evil Toons*, *Inner*

"I don't seek out nude work, but if you want to work as an actress in Hollywood, it helps to be able to roll with it."

—Brinke Stevens

Sanctum, *Little Devils*.

"Often times, the pre-'60s scream queens were portrayed as victims, and will primarily be remembered as screamers. Luckily, the image began to change, and women such as Barbara Steele, Martine Beswick and Ingrid Pitt played the roles that set a new trend for women, specifically villains and festsy heroines. I appreciate the fact that the scream queen image is expanding further. Hey, I'm quite the chameleon, playing roles that range from a detective (*The Alien Within*) and a sweet group leader (*Evil Toons*) to a sorority bitch who's so bad that she marries Satan (*Little Devils*). Not exactly the sort of stereotyping that plagued the scream queen of yesteryear."



Melissa Moore

Photo: Courtesy Bill George

■ Starr Andreoff

CREDITS: *Ghoulies II*, *The Terror Within*, *Dance of the Damned*, *Out of the Dark*, *Syngenor*, *Streets*.

"Now when I go to see horror movies, I laugh while my friends scream because I know how they're done. Though I wouldn't do *Sorority Sisters 12*, horror films have a big audience and I love them."

■ Michelle Bauer (a.k.a. Michelle McClellan)

CREDITS: *The Tomb*, *Night of the*

Living Babes, *Roller Blade*, *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*, *Nightmare Sisters*, *Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-O-Rama*, *Dr. Alien*, *Terror Night*, *Beverly Hills Vamp*, *Deadly Embrace*, *Deathrow Diner*, *Demonwarp*, *Phantom Empire*, *Millennium Countdown*, *Spirits*, *Evil Toons*, *Little Devils*.

"As far as nudity goes, I have a big influence from my husband, who would like to see me go on to bigger and better things because he doesn't like the full nudity. In *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*, there was a scene that called for it and it turned out fine and was

Michelle Bauer



Photo: Courtesy Bill George

tasteful. But there have been films that I turned down like *Roller Blade Warriors*, which included a 'sex' scene where a guy bends (the victim) over and rapes her. I turned it down because they said it was the 'selling point' of the film, and I said, 'This is too rough, too graphic, and I don't want to do it,' and I'm glad I did.

"Basically, my philosophy is just to have fun and not be under stress, enjoy what I'm doing and not do anything morally wrong. The only things I can think of

badly with it. I feel I have a bit of a following in the genre and I don't want to lose that. It is wonderful. I could get old and it would not matter; I could just get ugly and be a character."

"There should be some kind of restraint on love scenes...You can show just a little bit and still get the idea."
—Linnea Quigley

which would be morally wrong would be harming animals in a movie, or children—something that really goes against my beliefs."

■ Bobbie Bresee

CREDITS: *Mausoleum*, *Ghoulies*, *Star Slammer*, *Evil Spawn*, *Surf Nazis Must Die*.

"Someone asked me, 'Would you like to spend the rest of your life in horror?' That would be wonderful, I would in a minute...That is where I got my break, and there is an allegiance, and I would stick with it. Vincent Price did not do



Photo: Copyright 1989, Labyrinth

Monique Gabrielle

■ Ruth Collins

CREDITS: *Blood Sisters*, *Psychos in Love*, *Doom Asylum*, *Galactic Gigolo*, *Lurkers*, *Deadly Embrace*, *Death Collector*, *Cemetery High*, *Prime Evil*, *Exquisite Corpses*, *Neon Red*, *Wildest Dreams*, *Little Devils*.

"Overall, women have been portrayed as vulnerable little creatures à la *Psycho* and *The Boston Strangler*, but now they're fighting back with an endless list of films where they're coming out on top.

"*Blood Sisters* was my first movie. I saw a casting call for the movie that was printed in *Backstage* magazine. I submitted my picture and auditioned for Roberta Findlay, the film's director, though most of the roles in *Blood Sisters* had already been cast. But they went ahead and hired me for a dream sequence. I had no dialogue! But it was Roberta who gave me my very first acting role, and it gave me so much confidence. I did *Psychos in Love* only one week later, and started doing one film after another."

■ Barbara Crampton

CREDITS: *Body Double*, *Re-Animator*, *Pulse Pounders* ("Evil Clergyman" segment), *Chopping Mall*, *From Beyond*, *Puppetmaster*. (See Fango #60.)

■ Jennifer DeLora

CREDITS: *Deranged* (1987), *Robot Holocaust*, *Fright House*, *Frankenhooker*, *Deadly Manor*.

■ Lydie Denier

CREDITS: *Blood Relations*, *Satan's Princess*, *Red Blooded American Girl*, *Midnight Cabaret* (bit).

■ Sherilyn Fenn

CREDITS: *Out of Control*, *The Wraith*, *Zombie High*, *Crime Zone*, *Meridian*, *Wild at Heart*.

■ Deborah Foreman

CREDITS: *April Fool's Day*, *Destroyer*, *Waxwork*, *Lobster Man from Mars*, *Sundown*, *Lunatics: A Love Story*.

(See FANGO BLOODY BEST #9.)

■ Monique Gabrielle

CREDITS: *Amazon Women on the Moon*, *Deathstalker II*, *Not of this Earth* (1988; bit), *The Return of Swamp Thing*, *Transylvania Twist*,



Tower of Terror, Evil Toons.

■ *Elizabeth Kaitan (Cayton)*

CREDITS: *Silent Madness, Silent Night, Deadly Night Part 2, Slave Girls from Beyond Infinity, Assault of the Killer Bimbos, Friday the 13th, Part VII: The New Blood, Necromancer, Roller Blade Warriors: Taken by Force, Aftershock, Nightwish.*

"I launched my career as a model for Troma's posters and press campaigns. My experience with the company started when I was 18 and brand new in the business. I met Lloyd Kaufman and Michael Herz through a producer friend. Two weeks after the introduction, I was photographed for *Love-In Arrangement*, my first poster for Troma, which we shot on a rainy day in Connecticut. The photo is

of me coming out of a pool, wearing jeans and a wet T-shirt. That one is still my favorite. After that one, I was photographed for posters for *Bloodsucking Freaks, The First Turn-On, Splatter University, Squeeze Play* and others."

■ *Kathleen Kinmont*

CREDITS: *Phoenix the Warrior, Halloween 4, Roller Blade Warriors: Taken by Force, Bride of Re-Animator, Rush Week.*

"All Freddy has to worry about is his face, head and hands. (On *Bride of Re-Animator*) I was completely made up from head to toe for days! It was quite an experience, a challenge. The (KNB) effects guys were great and worked hard to make me comfortable during our six-hour makeup marathons. In full makeup I

couldn't lie down or sit, so they rigged this bed so I could rest against it between shooting."

■ *Debra Lamb*

CREDITS: *Warlords, B.O.R.N., Beverly Hills Vamp, Deathrow Gameshow, Invisible Maniac, Stripped to Kill II, Evil Spirits.*

■ *Ashley Lawrence*

CREDITS: *Hellraiser, Hellbound: Hellraiser II.*
(See Fango #80.)

■ *Melissa Moore*

CREDITS: *Scream Dream, The Alien Within, Nightie Nightmare, Invisible Maniac, Tower of Terror, Repossessed, Vampire Cop, Soul Mates.*

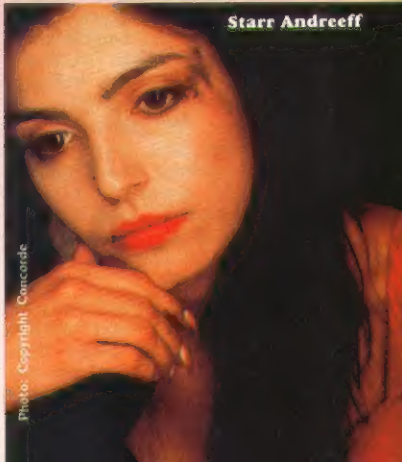
"Horror films formerly treated

"I turned down [a rape scene] because they said it was the 'selling point' of the film, and I said, 'This is too rough.'"

—Michelle Bauer

women as props, or even glamorized them as victims. But these days, the roles are developing substance, and women are even turning into central characters. We're much more of a presence. I have been killed in movies, but I've also played the killer.

"When I was working on *Repossessed*, I was very nervous. It was my first major film. My scene was with the film's star, Leslie Nielsen. Realizing that I was nervous, he seated himself beside me and said, 'I don't want you to get



Starr Andreff



Photo: Copyright 1990 Capital Cities/ABC

Karen Witter

all nervous just because I'm a big star.' All of a sudden, he emitted this *really loud farting sound*. Everyone turned around. I looked at him and started laughing. It turns out that he carries around a machine with a prerecorded fart sound. He does it to everybody just to put them at ease. Leslie is a funny, wonderful man."

■ *Linnea Quigley*

CREDITS: *Fairy Tales, Don't Go Near the Park, Graduation Day, The Black Room, Savage Streets, Silent Night, Deadly Night, Return of the Living Dead, Creepozoids, Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers, Nightmare Sisters, Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-O-Rama, A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master (bit), Night of the Demons, Witchtrap, Sexbomb, Dr. Alien, Deadly Embrace, Murder Weapon, Linnea Quigley's Horror Workout, Robot Ninja, Digging Up Business, Blood Church (formerly titled Fallen Angels).*

"My favorites, selected from my own movies, are *Savage Streets, Return of the Living Dead* and *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*. One of the differences between my

association with horror films, and scream queens of past generations, is that I don't faint as much.

"As I've done more and more films, I find that they sometimes impose nudity in certain scenes where I really don't want to do it. There should be some kind of restraint on love scenes...I love to watch them when they're nicely shot, but don't necessarily show a

Bowl-O-Rama, Attack of the B-Movie Monster, Warlords, Grandmother's House, Transylvania Twist, Dark Romances, The Haunting Fear, Bad Girls from Mars, Naked Force, Spirits, Teenage Exorcist, Shadows in the City.

"I'm a healthy, red-blooded American girl with no particular hangups like shyness. I don't seek out nude work, but it's there, face

"Women are much more of a presence [in today's horror films]. I have been killed in movies, but I've also played the killer."

—Melissa Moore

lot. You can show just a little bit and still get the idea."

■ *Brinke Stevens*

CREDITS: *Slumber Party Massacre, Sole Survivor, Body Double, Terminal Velocity, Slave Girls from Beyond Infinity, Nightmare Sisters, Sorority Babes in the Slimeball*

if, and if you want to work as an actress in Hollywood, it helps to be able to roll with it. I'm comfortable enough working sans clothing, after my fine past experiences with some of the most outstanding glamor photographers in the world. In my perspective, a beautiful female body is a precious gift...to hide it away shows a lack of

Kathleen Kinmont

Photo: Courtesy Bill George





Photo: Austin Enterprises/Wild Way Films

Brinke Stevens

proper appreciation. Years from now, when I look back on the photographs and movies I did as a lovely young woman, I know I'll be glad I had the good sense to take advantage of my assets and opportunities instead of wasting them."

■ Patricia Tallman

CREDITS: *Knightriders*, *Tales from the Darkside* ("Family Reunion"), *Monkey Shines* (bit), *Night of the Living Dead* ('90).

"Barbara is not your typical woman-in-horror-movie role. Barbara doesn't fall down when the zombies are chasing her, and I liked that about (playing) her."

■ Terri Treas

CREDITS: *The Nest*, *The Terror Within*, *Deathstalker 3*, *Alien Nation* (TV), *Frankenstein Unbound* (voice), *House III* (a.k.a. *House IV*). (See STARLOG #153.)

■ Dawn Wildsmith

CREDITS: *The Tomb*, *Evils of the Night*, *Deep Space*, *Star Slammer*, *Cyclone*, *Warlords*, *Evil Spawn*, *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*, *Phantom Empire*, *Surf Nazis Must Die*, *Alienator*, *B.O.R.N.*, *Beverly Hills Vamp*, *Wizards of the Demon Sword*, *Digging Up Business*, *Nerds of a Feather*.

■ Karen Witter

CREDITS: *Mortuary Academy*, *The Vineyard*, *Out of the Dark*, *Buried Alive*, *Popcorn*.

"It was a shame John Carradine was working (on *Buried Alive*). It seemed like he was just not in good health, and he should have

"I could get old and it would not matter: I could just get ugly and be a character."

—Bobbie Eresco

stayed home and taken care of himself, and relaxed, and been a human being for a while. It was really uncomfortable for him. I don't think he got much out of the film.

"I don't ever watch horror films, to be honest. I watch my own, because they're mine, but I'm really not all that interested in them. I wouldn't mind doing something that was really scary, but my goal isn't to specialize in the genre." ❧

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The Thinking Man's Scream Queen

Bright, articulate and appealing, Jill Schoelen doesn't quite fit into the current horror-heroine mold. Perhaps it's her dark-haired, dark-eyed attractiveness which, while striking, is miles away from the blue-eyed blondes that populate many a horrorfest. Or perhaps it's because she seems to radiate a wholesome, sensible quality, matched with a real intelligence and sense of self—all unique attributes in the horror cinema these days. Unlike the horror heroines who seem to be hired solely for their looks, Schoelen is interesting on an intellectual as well as a physical level.

Schoelen's unorthodox image, charming as it is, has sometimes worked against her, however. Although she ended up with the lead role in *Popcorn*, she initially lost the part to blonde Amy (Honey, I Shrunk the Kids) O'Neill. In a double switch, Schoelen replaced O'Neill after filming had begun, just as first-time director Mark Herrier took over for Alan Ormsby. "The [former] director had a direction that he wanted to take the picture, and I didn't fit in that direction," she confides. "And, strangely enough, that direction is the same reason I almost didn't get *Phantom of the Opera*. They wanted

The actress won instant genre celebrity defending herself against *The Stepfather*.



Photo: Courtesy Eric Cadin



Too much gore smothered *Phantom of the Opera*'s romantic elements, says Schoelen.

to cast me in *Phantom*, because they thought I could walk in and do the job—and I feel like I did very good work. But I was not their idea of...the victim. They wanted that princessy, blonde look.

"Men have their ideas of what sexy is," she continues. "They want tight clothes and big pouffy hair. They don't necessarily see sexy as just getting out of the shower and throwing on a pair of jeans, a white T-shirt and tennis, while I do."

Schoelen, a Southern California native, broke into the film business in 1981, when she sang in a *Fame*-type TV pilot called *Best of Times*. Her first genre credit came in Wes Craven's 1985 TV movie *Chiller*, a tale about a man thawed out after a decade in cryogenic cold storage that starred Michael Beck. Two years later, she made it to the big screen as Shelley Hack's daughter in the sleeper hit *The Stepfather*, heroically fighting off the murderous advances of Terry O'Quinn's chillingly delineated middle-American madman. "I don't really view *Stepfather* as a horror picture—although it certainly has some horrific elements in it," she notes with a laugh.

Plenty of horrific elements were also on tap in her next major genre effort, 1989's *The Phantom of the Opera*, with Robert Englund as the titular character. "The killings, and everything else that takes place in *Phantom*, are a part of the story, part of a classic book," she maintains. "What I object to in horror films is when they arbitrarily kill people, and do things that make it grotesque, and chances are children will be seeing it."

"*Phantom* was a beautiful picture," she continues. "It was beautiful to look at. And I probably shouldn't say this, but I personally feel that, in the editing process, too much emphasis was put on the killings. Yes, you had to show them. But why

show 10 seconds when you only need to show three? The story should be about how he killed for the love of this girl, and therefore they didn't need to overemphasize those [gore] scenes. That did the picture a great disservice, and Robert is so good that it did *him* a disservice."

Since *Phantom*, Schoelen has turned up in the direct-to-video *Curse II: The Bite*, which found her contending with not only Jamie Farr as a bumbling doctor but also J. Eddie Peck as a boyfriend whose body is appropriated by snakes, and *Cutting Class*, in which she deals with high school murders. Donovan Leitch's bad haircut and being the daughter of Martin Mull. As Maggie, a young woman menaced by an apparition from her mother's past, Schoelen got top billing in her latest, *Popcorn*. That role is just the kind she likes.

"Maggie is a girl who has a lot of life, a lot of creativity, and who is very much in tune with her feelings," explains Schoelen. "She's very strong-willed. I have a big problem with pictures in the horror genre that want to play the girl as weak, that want to play her as the victim. She can be victimized, because even the strongest of us can fall victim to a certain situation. But it's very important that if she's victimized, it's because her *will* has been taken away. Eventually, she has to prevail. I find it a mistake in a lot of horror pictures when they make the female characters so victimized from the inside. I don't feel that Maggie is this way. Although she is a victim, she's strong. She has a mind of her own."

And despite her abhorrence of the V word, Schoelen insists that she's not putting horror movies down. "I happen to love certain kinds of horror," she smiles. "I just don't like cheap horror, made for the sake of slashing people up."

—John Wooley